



News Release

For immediate release: June 7, 2011

(11-085)

Contacts: [Gordon MacCracken](#), Communications Office
[John LaRocque](#), Public Works Board

360-236-4072

360-725-3166

Drinking Water: Forty Washington projects to receive low-interest loans

OLYMPIA — The state Department of Health is recommending 40 projects for more than \$71 million in low-cost Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loans this year. If all of the systems receive final approval this summer, it will be the first time in the program's history that all eligible applicants receive funding.

This achievement is significant because federal contributions to the fund are shrinking. This year, the federal contribution is about 47 percent of the total amount available for loans. The fund has grown over time, thanks to income from interest as past recipients pay off their loans.

The fund is jointly administered by the Department of Health's Office of Drinking Water, the Washington State Public Works Board, and the Washington Department of Commerce. The Public Works Board received the draft list on May 25 and is scheduled to take final action in August.

Interest rates on loans are typically 1.5 percent, but can be as low as 1 percent based on the community's ability to pay for the work. Projects are selected based on public health priorities and proper planning.

"It's great that for the first time, we may be able to provide low-cost loans to every eligible applicant," said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "That means we can help people in a lot of communities throughout our state count on safe and reliable drinking water."

Under a new eligibility requirement this year applicants must have an approved water system plan that includes the proposed project. This requirement helps ensure that drinking water projects are ready to proceed if approved for a loan.

The largest loans this year would go to the cities of Tacoma, Kent, and Covington, along with the Lakehaven Utility District – a combined total of \$12 million – for a regional water filtration facility. The communities use the Green River as a water source. River water is more vulnerable to natural and manmade contaminants than well water, so it must be more thoroughly filtered and disinfected.

Besides paying for loans for water system improvements, the fund supports key state and federal drinking water program activities. These include new Safe Drinking Water Act initiatives, source water protection, and technical assistance to water systems.

“Improving aging water infrastructure is critical to public safety,” said Public Works Board Chair Stan Finkelstein. “These projects will ensure that reliable and affordable drinking water is accessible to communities across the state of Washington.”

More information on the [loan fund](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/dwsrf.htm) (www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/dwsrf.htm) and a list of all loans and project descriptions are available on the Office of Drinking Water’s website.

The [Department of Health website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

###